# ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method and system is provided for allowing designers, who are primarily concerned with the look and feel of the program, to modify the dialogs in an application being developed without having to rely on the developers to generate executable code in

5    each iteration. Intelligent defaults for parameters that are either not specified in a resource definition or governed by a common style specification are provided to facilitate switching from one dialog element to another without requiring that all of the parameters be specified again.

Such defaults include using the parameters from a preceding resource element or a

10    style specification, or a parent node in a tree corresponding to the parsed markup language. The use of a markup language facilitates providing defaults by permitting a basic style specification to be made available at runtime. The markup language facilitates specifying with an attribute, e.g., RELATIVE, that needed values are obtained from the preceding control.

15    In addition, defaults reflecting standardized choices, unless overridden explicitly, can be introduced to reflect a particular style in the Resource Files or the particular markup language employed. This further optimizes the development process by freeing the developers and the designers from having to supply the routine parameters, and instead only the variance from the norm need be attended to during application

20    development.